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Expostulatory and Pacifick L E T T E R,

By Way of Reply to the Rev^d Mr.
GEE's Letter of Remarks, on the
printed Testimony of the late Con-
vention of Pastors in *Boston*, against
several *Errors* and *Disorders* in the
Land: Address'd to the Rev^d Mr.
NATHANAEL EELLS their Mode-
rator.

By *John Hancock,*

Pastor of the first Church of CHRIST in *Braintree*.

Prov. xviii. 19. *A Brother offended is harder to be won than
a strong City: and their Contentions are like the Bars of
a Castle.*

1 Cor. 5. 7. *Purge out therefore the old Leaven.*

B O S T O N, Printed and Sold by ROGERS and FOWLE
in Queen-street, next to the Prison. 1743.

Explanatory and Technical

J. E. T. R.

By Way of Reply to the Rev. Mr.
 G. A. Smith of Haverhill, on the
 printed testimony of the late Gen.
 James O. Smith, in a letter signed
 James O. Smith, dated in the
 year 1844, and published in the
 "Latter-day Evangelist," Vol. 1, No. 1,
 p. 10.



By John H. W. Wood,
 of the City of New York, in answer
 to a letter from the Rev. Mr. G. A. Smith,
 dated in the year 1844, and published
 in the "Latter-day Evangelist," Vol. 1,
 No. 1, p. 10.

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LETTER, &c.

Rev^d Brother,

I AM extremely surpris'd and sorry (with many others) to see your printed Letter of Remarks, on the publick Testimony of the late Reverend Convention : More especially for the Impropriety (as I humbly conceive) of your appearing at the Head of this Controversy, and opening a new Scene of Disputation ; and for the intemperate Spirit and Design you seem to discover in the whole Performance.

Sir, I must confess, I should have sooner expected such a Letter of Remarks from almost any other Minister in the Province than from your self, not from the least Apprehension of Insufficiency for the Task, but considering the Spirit of Jealousy and Separation that hath unhappily come upon you with respect to your Reverend Brethren, which meeting with a Temper, not perhaps the most flexible, is not easily overcome and suppressed.

I believe, it is evident to all sober unprejudiced Readers, that you *occupied the Room* of a Remarker under a Spirit of too much Resentment to serve the Cause you espouse, or your own Credit that is engag'd in it. Some of your good Friends would doubtless have excus'd this Labour— (all Things considered) with a *Master spare thy self*.

I'm

I'm sensible, Sir, 'tis no easy Task for Gentlemen, even of a cool Spirit, when dipt in Controversy, to keep their Temper sweet and pleasant, and *know what Spirit they are of*. And doubtless, with all your Attainments in Knowledge and Grace, you have been exercised herein to suppress the Workings of that *Spirit that lusteth to Envy*.

I am persuaded, that when you come to reflect, in the cool of the Day, on your Performance, you will see Reason to retract some Things, which, if I mistake not, are written in a hasty Spirit, and which tend not to the Use of edifying.

Some of your Friends are very jealous lest the *Archers* should hit and sorely wound you under your present feeble and broken State, but I would hope better Things, even in the present *Strife of Tongues*; endeavouring to stir up my self and my *reverend Brethren* by Way of Remembrance of that sacred Admonition, *A soft Answer turneth away Wrath; but grievous Words stir up Anger*.

Sir, my principal Design in this Essay (however unequal to it) is to point out some Instances of that intemperate Spirit and Zeal which seem to run thro' your Letter, and which I fear led you into some unhappy Mistakes.

I think it must be owing to such a Spirit and Zeal, that you so hastily catch'd at a Shadow of Reason for attaching Dr. CHAUNCY on the Title-Page of the *Testimony*, particularly for publishing it with SUCH A POMPOUS AND DELUSIVE TITLE. But the Dr's handsome Vindication of himself, together with your Retraction, forbid all further Remarks upon this Head.

You are careful to represent " the Danger that Strangers
" may be in, of being misled into this false Judgment, name-
" ly that our anniversary Convention is to be considered as a
" formed Body of all the Pastors of the Churches in this Pro-
" vince of the *Massachusetts-Bay*, acting in their ecclesiastical
" Character, whose Determinations are to be regarded as car-
" rying some special Power and Authority with them, like that
" of a *provincial Synod*." And then add, " that our *annual*
" *Convention* is an *Assembly of Pastors* merely occasional, &c,
" Page 4, 5.

Now

Now Sir, Is it not your Design by thus industriously exposing the Weakness of our *anniversary Convention* to weaken the Influence of their late solemn Testimony against the prevailing Disorders of these Times? And do you think to *do GOD Service* by thus enervating the *Force of those right Words*, as coming from a considerable Number of the Senior, very judicious and pious *Pastors* of these Churches?

But supposing it be really so (which I don't deny), How came you, reverend Brother, eight Years ago to separate yourself from the *Convention*, not only *viva voce*, but by a *drawn Instrument* which you read before many Witnesses?

And I can't help remarking here that when you appeared, and offered to speak at the *late Convention*, you was pleased to put the Convention upon proving this notorious Fact, which not a little surpris'd and moved many of your *Fathers and Brethren*. Wherefore suffer me to expostulate with you reverend Brother.

1. Whether the hasty Temper you discover in your Letter towards Dr. CHAUNCEY be not owing, in some Measure, to his openly opposing your speaking in the *late Convention*, 'till you were pleased to make some Retraction of your former Conduct in separating from it?

2. Whether when it was proposed by some *reverend Gentlemen* there present, that if you would please to declare you then spake as a Member of this Convention, you should have all Liberty of Speech, you did not hastily refuse in the intemperate Heat of Spirit?

" Another false Judgment upon Matters of Fact into which you think many Readers may be led, is this, namely, That none but such as are Pastors of the Churches of the Province of the *Massachusetts-Bay* were admitted to Vote in the late Convention, whereas 'tis well known that others were admitted to Vote who are Pastors of Churches beyond the Bounds of this Province," P. 6.

This Representation is evidently to shew the Inconsistency of the Stile of the *Title-Page* of this *Testimony*: But Sir, I challenge you upon this Point, viz.

To produce above one Instance of a Pastor of a neighbouring Province, or Colony, that voted the Articles in the *printed Testimony*,

Testimony, particularly the last, upon which you insist most. I don't indeed think there was so much as a single Instance ; to be sure, I could not find one by diligent Search in the Time of it, and I heard several of the Pastors in the Province of New-Hampshire expressly declare, the Evening after, that they did not vote ; those Gentlemen modestly excusing and contenting themselves with being Spectators only.

What a slender Reason have you then for supposing as you do (Page 7.) " That the Majority in the last Vote (which occasion'd such Debates about the late Revival of Religion) " was determined by them who are not Pastors in this Province " ? followed with another Supposition and Insinuation, " that the Vote on the last Paragraph was the Execution of " a Design among a Party." Upon which I must express my Grief for your Suggestion of the Prevalency of a Party-Spirit in such an Assembly of Divines.

Sir, having worn the *Title-Page* of *this Instrument* as you are pleas'd to call it, by spending near seven Pages of Remarks upon it, which the most of your Readers think you might as well have spared ; You turn over a new Leaf, and attach the *Testimony* it self, passing a severe Censure upon it as " unlikely to have a good Effect for the Revival and Advancement of real, vital and practical Religion." Together with a plain Insinuation that the Convention who formed it had not at Heart, nor were well acquainted with, the State of Religion in this Land for several Years past. And you freely declare it to be your Judgment, " that if we consider it in " *the whole* as a *Testimony against Disorders and Errors*, it powerfully tends to *unhappy Effects*, both among them *who live " at a great Distance from us*, and among *our own Churches*." You add also, with great Freedom of Speech, " I know not " how any Thing could be better calculated and contrived to " confirm the *fallacious Accounts of the State of Religion in " New-England*, which have lately been sent over to *Scotland*, " by some virulent Opposers of the remarkable Work of " GOD's Grace, which has been carrying on in various Parts " of our Land, for some Years past."

Reverend Sir, I'm apt to think that the Charity that becomes a Gentleman of your Character would dispose you to
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put a better Construction upon the Spirit and Conduct of the late *Convention*.—I'm very sorry a Gentleman of your Station should insinuate, that the *Convention* instead of having the State of Religion at Heart in forming this *Testimony*, &c. — were carrying on a Party Design to the Hurt and wounding of Religion here, and confirming the *fallacious Accounts of the State of Religion*, that have been sent abroad.

Perhaps the *florid Accounts*, in Favour of this *remarkable Work*, that have been sent into *Scotland from hence*, have not been perfectly free from the high Charge of Fallacy ; at least I Appeal to those worthy Gentlemen themselves that have been most early and pompous (not to say delusive) in their Accounts of the flourishing State of Religion here, whether if they were to send over their Accounts under the present Darkness and Disorder attending the Work of GOD, they could in Conscience make such a perfect Work of it. It is evident beyond all Contradiction, that both the plausible Accounts sent from hence to *Scotland*, and from thence to us, were drawn up too suddenly to give the World a just and sober Representation of the State of Religion for some Years past, as if the worthy Authors were striving for the Mastery, who should be first in this good Cause. It is observable that the Testimonies concerning the State of Religion in foreign Parts do as widely differ, as the Testimonies that are given of it from among ourselves ; and it is no easy Matter to sift out the Truth : Nor do I at all wonder, that some serious and inquisitive Gentlemen in *Scotland* are very desirous of being informed of the true Sentiments of the Body of the Clergy of this Province concerning it, which some may perhaps fear may be collected, both from the Rev. Mr. *Appleton's Convention Sermon*, printed at the almost *universal* Desire of the late *Convention of Pastors*, and also from their *printed Testimony against the Errors and Disorders in the Land*.

You are pleased Sir, (Page 8.) to mention several Authors of these *fallacious Accounts*, whose Vindication it is not my Business to attempt, neither do I suppose they would desire it of me considering their own Abilities to vindicate themselves : Only, you must excuse me if I say you appear to do it with a Sneer, as if the Characters of some of them were so exceptionable

exceptionable as to render their Accounts suspected; but Truth is great, and may be spoken by an Opposer.

Dear Sir, suffer me to remark here what, as far as I understand, is universally noticed, viz. That you would have done yourself much more Honour, if you had spared the Rev. Mr. Mather, and your Marginal Note upon him. Don't you now really think so yourself, considering old Things that are passed away? Don't there seem to be one Ounce of the old Leaven in your Soweriness towards your late Rev. Colleague? If it be so, as a Man of GOD, you will diligently search and purge it out.

You, and others, in the same Way of thinking, may represent these Accounts in as dim a Light as you please, yet nothing is more notorious, than that within these two or three Years past, Antinomian and Familistical Errors, Enthusiasm, gross Delusions, and scandalous Disorders of various Kinds, have been lamentably prevailing in our Churches to the great Darkening and Hindrance of the Work of GOD. And true it is, that this printed Testimony of the late Convention tends to put this Matter beyond all Dispute, and if it so happens that this Testimony contradicts some hasty Accounts of the late Revival of Religion in *New-England* that have been sent abroad, why should the Convention be blamed when they are called to make a faithful Declaration against the manifest Disorders that have attended it.

I can't imagine, Sir, how such a *Testimony* against *Errors* and *Disorders* should tend to increase them, and obstruct the Progress of GOD's Work, as you insinuate and say, Page 10. I am more apt to think, it hath a direct Tendency to prevent the Growth of Errors; and so to promote the Work of GOD's Grace in the Land. And I'm confident, that if the Pastors of these Churches had acted more closely up to the Rev. Mr. Tennent's Maxim, *Principiis obsta, to crush the Cockatrice in the Egg*, (and I wish he himself had begun sooner to practise upon it) it would have been an excellent Preservative against the growing Disorders of these Times; and so would have shorned, if not superseded the printed *Testimony*.

Moreover, I'm much confirmed in this Opinion, because it is evident that in the Instance of Visions and Trances, which Ministers,

Ministers in general were zealous to oppose at first, are I think universally ceased in the Land. Whereas, if they had been countenanced by a Number of the Leaders of this People, we had been furnished long ago with sufficient to have made a *Romish Legend*.

This makes me think, that the Silence of Ministers in bearing a faithful and seasonable Testimony against Disorders is the blameable Cause of their Increase and Continuance among us. Many Pastors of this Convention apprehended that Necessity was laid upon them now, at least, to testify publicly against those growing Disorders : Neither have I any Reason to surmise, but that they form'd their Testimony from a serious and hearty Concern for the flourishing State of Religion in the Land.

I would charitably hope with you, Reverend Sir, that many " among our selves have lately experienced a saving Conver-
" sion to GOD ; but must dissent from you in *supposing that*
" *they will be tempted to entertain Prejudices against their own*
" *Pastors, as well as other Ministers* because they gave not a fuller Attestation to a remarkable Revival of Religion in various Parts of the Land. I rather think such as are true Converts will judge their Pastors faithful in making such a Stand against prevailing Disorders, which threaten to destroy the Work of GOD.

Moreover, I've Reason to think that Multitudes in those Places that have been rent with them, as well as others, had great Expectation of receiving such a faithful Testimony from the late Convention of Pastors ; and I'm sorely grieved that you raise and sanctify Prejudices in the Minds of People upon this Head that may be in Danger of *leavening the whole Lump*. For 'tis very evident that the Minds of many are unhappily leavened with Prejudice already against their faithful Pastors, and we need not help forward their Afflictions.

You then proceed, Sir, (in Page 10) by Way of Prevention or Correction of the supposed bad Effects of this *Testimony*, both at Home and abroad to publish to the World as undeniable Matter of *Fact*, (1) That scarce one third Part of the " Pastors of the Churches of this Province were present at the " late Convention. True : And what then ? Are they not

for all that properly stiled the Convention of Pastors of this Province? Were there not as many present at this Convention as has been known at any Time? I know very well that the Paucity of the Number has not been admitted as any Objection against their acting in some important Affairs, particularly in distributing the charitable Collection from Year to Year. Though if there be any Defect in the Distribution of it, I hope it will be remedied by preaching the Convention-Sermon for the future, at nine o'Clock in the Morning.

You affirm also (2). "That of those Pastors who were present, it was but a small Majority that voted the last Article or Paragraph, which caused such Debates about an Attestation to the Work of GOD's Grace, appearing of late Years in a remarkable Revival of Religion among these Churches.

You then appeal, Sir, to the Rev. Moderator that "upon counting the Votes, when there were at least *seventy Ministers* present, he declared that *Thirty Eight* was the Number who voted in the Affirmative."

You offer several concurring Circumstances to support this Fact, and express your Surprise to have heard this Point contested and denied more than once by some, and at length you say, "You are perswaded the Moderator will be ready at any Time to attest this Fact."

Whereupon, apprehending I had a just Right to be ascertained of it, I sent a Letter to the Rev. Moderator *July 1.* humbly requesting him to certify me of two Facts, very confidently asserted in your Letter, about which I was of doubtful Mind, viz. The foremention'd Fact, and that mention'd in *Page 3.* of your printed Letter, *whether he plainly told that Assembly, he could not subscribe the Testimony for himself personally: Upon which there was a Vote for his signing it as Moderator.* But that good Gentleman refused to give me any Satisfaction in either of these Points, in his Answer to me.

I confess, I am at a loss how to account for the Moderator's Conduct, upon Supposition that he refused to *subscribe for himself personally*, who has been most famous of any in these Parts for a steady Opposer of the very Disorders and Errors mentioned in the Testimony; I observe this very much to

his Honour, for by differencing between the Good and Evil, he, together with many others, have approved themselves true Friends to the Work of GOD.

But from all I can find after diligent Enquiry into this Matter, it is far otherwise ; the Moderator, as his constant Practice has all along been, only expressed his Desire, that the Members that voted the *Testimony* should subscribe it with him, but it was voted that the Moderator should sign it alone ; this I believe is the Truth of the Case.

As to the other Fact about polling upon the last Paragraph of the *Testimony*, I will freely declare also what appears to me to be the whole Truth, viz, I believe the Moderator did count the Votes as you assert. But it was done sometime after the Vote upon the last Article was passed, and after diverse Members were gone off, supposing the Votes to have been now finished. This is what several Members of that Convention who voted the *Testimony*, have told me for their Parts, and which I'm told, was the Case of several others who moved from the Convention.

Besides, diverse Gentlemen who never voted at all, in passing any of those Articles (some out of Principle, others apprehending they had no Right to vote) were counted on the Negative without any Distinction.

I'll dismiss this Point with one Remark more, viz. That every one of the Articles in the *printed Testimony* relating to *Errors* and *Disorders* were voted in the Affirmative by a very great Majority.

Rev. Sir, you would not have it thought " that the Committee, chosen to draw up a Report on this Occasion, were all of them shutting out an Attestation to the late Work of God's holy Spirit among us.

In Answer to this I shall only remark two Things.

(1) That the Character of every one of that *Rev. Committee* is so well established, as not to admit of the least Doubt that they are Friends to the Work of GOD's Grace, and are always ready to set to their Seal to the Truth : Neither can I begin to think in my Heart, that we were in *Perils* by false Brethren at that Time, or that there is any Reason to cry out a *Confederacy*, a *Confederacy* against the Work of GOD.

(2) If

(2) If any of that *Rev. Committee* were dissatisfied at the Report, it would have been but fair and friendly in them to have made their Remonstrance in Presence of the *Committee*, before it was brought into public; which I've been informed was not the Case.

Rev. Sir, you then complain of it as *undeniable Fact*, (P.3)
 " That when Pastors of an established Character as Friends to
 " the Cause of Truth and Holiness, would have testified what
 " they tho't concerning the late Revival of Religion in various
 " Parts of the Land, they were interrupted in a rude Manner
 " and treated with open Contempt." *You go on to say* " is
 " it not true in Fact, that many earnest Pleas for their being
 " heard were stifled in Clamour and Opposition ?

Rev. Brother, If such an Assembly had indeed treated one another with so much Rudeness, Contempt and Clamour, would it not have been much more becoming your Character, instead of exposing their Nakedness, to have silently covered it with a Mantle of Charity ? That *Charity which covereth a Multitude of Sins*.

But really Sir, I am not sensible that the Charge is just : I know there was too much intemperate Heat and Passion expressed by Gentlemen on both Sides of the Question; and to the best of my Observation, full as much on one Side as t'other, whereby it was evident, that we are all *Men of like Passions* ! Nay, you are the only Person, I ever heard speak of the Behaviour of that *Rev. Gentleman* you refer to (in the Margin) in the soft Language of a *just Warmth of Resentment*, testifying against
 " the bad Spirit that appear'd to prevail in the Assembly, and
 " the ill Treatment given to Pastors, who only desir'd a patient hearing, while they spake in Favour of the late Work
 " of GOD's Grace.

But, Sir, Pastors had Liberty of Speech there in the Cause of GOD ; and to the best of my Remembrance were generally treated with Respect and Decency.

Its true, you was opposed speaking in that Convention, 'till you would be brought to say at least, that you spake as a Member of it, which you refusing to do, your Attestation was not received, and its generally thought, that Justice was done you.

I must remark here, that several worthy Gentlemen on your Side of the Question did not seem at that Time to be in the Exercise of that *Wisdom, which is easy to be entreated*. For after several Concessions were made on some Articles in the Report at their Desire, it was publicly observed, that they did not vote one single Article in the printed Testimony : For which extraordinary Conduct you profess to give a Reason (in P. 12, 13) which possibly may be found wanting.

You are not ignorant, Sir, that it was said in the Debate, that the Time would not allow of every Members giving a particular Account of the extraordinary Work in his own Place, which was one Reason of their not being heard more fully upon that Head, and did not proceed from a *united* Endeavour in the *Pastors to shut out an Attestation to the Work of GOD's holy Spirit among us*. And to be plain, there was also a Jealousy in the Minds of Gentlemen, who appear'd zealous for the Testimony, that the Rev. *Protesters* spared no Pains to prevent the passing and Publication of it.

Rev. Brother, as to your declaring publicly with great Freedom " that you are one of those Ministers in *Boston* who, in " Concurrence with a Number of Ministers in the Country, " have desired and proposed to have an Interview at *Boston* " *the Day after the approaching Commencement* " ; That is in plain English, to have a *separate Convention*, in order to give *an open conjunct Testimony to the late happy Revival of Religion in many Parts of this Land. &c.*

I firmly believe you heartily concur in this extraordinary Motion, and the rather, because it is carrying on the same Design you seem'd to project ever since you separated in such an extraordinary Manner from the Convention above seven Years ago, viz. *The holding a separate Convention* : To prevent which, I am one of those Pastors which told you, dear Brother, at that Time, we would upon our Knees entreat your Continuance among us, but we were unhappily disappointed.

The Projection, if I mistake not, was to begin with separating the *united Ministers of Boston*, which happily fail'd by the kind Mediation of some of your Reverend Fathers and Brethren ; and perhaps, I my self was instrumental to reconcile

reconcile them, though in a most secret, yet not less sincere and effectual Manner.

But, Reverend Brother, Why do the Reverend Gentlemen concerned in this Affair, appear so shy of subscribing this Proposal (*for to do you Justice, you are the only Gentleman who has not acted behind the Curtain, by refusing a Subscription to this Account*) and appointing the Place of Meeting for the designed Interview of Pastors--- both in the common News Letters and your own printed Letter --- but oblige your Fathers and Brethren to *call at the Place of your Abode for Information* : Would it not have been much more fair, open and generous, to have given the most publick Notice of the Place of convening, that all your Reverend Fathers and Brethren might come to the Help of the common Cause.

Sir, I have finished my Remarks upon your Letter, in which I have sincerely aim'd at declaring the whole Truth ; and if I am mistaken in any material Point, or have transgressed the Rules of Decency and Charity, I heartily desire to be forgiven.

And now, dear Brother, suffer me to expostulate with you on this *melancholy Occasion*. Why do you strive in this Manner to promote a *separate Convention* ? Will the common Salvation be really promoted by it ? Won't the Effects of it be sad and fatal to the true Interest of Piety ? Won't the common Adversary to Truth and Peace be gratified by such Altercations between the Ministers of our holy Religion ?

I beseech you, let us take Heed of *falling out by the Way*. *Let there be no Strife between the Ministers of CHRIST, for we are Brethren: Let us love as Brethren, be pitiful and courteous.*

In fine, I am fully perswaded that the most effectual Method, under GOD, to reduce GOD's People to a proper Temper of Mind, and the Order of the Gospel, is for the Clergy to shew a reconciling and charitable Spirit, and first be reconciled among themselves : then may they with a better Grace and Force address the People to consider
and

and reform their Ways. And it is high Time for us all to attempt this ; and may the GOD of Peace and Order in all the Churches of his Saints add his Blessing to our united Prayers and Endeavours to forward and accomplish such a glorious Design.

Dear Brother, wishing you Health and all the Blessings and Comforts of a successful Ministry, and desiring your Prayers for me, that I may be in Health, and my Soul prosper ; and that I may be prepared to give up a good Account of my Stewardship.

I am your affectionate Brother,

and Servant in the Ministry of the Gospel,

Braintree, July 5.

1743.

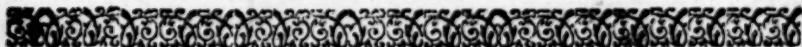
John Hancock.



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Fowle in Queen-street next to the Prison,

A Letter concerning *Toleration*: To which
is added, a Postscript concerning *Heresie*
and *Schism*. Both by JOHN LOCKE, Gent.

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